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*Reinhardt von Gekler*

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Chief, Foreign Division M

Chief of Station, Karlsruhe

Interview with UTILITY, 26 June 1950

1. The interview had been set originally for 26 June at 1600 hours in UTILITY's office in the compound at Pullach. I was visited an hour before the appointed time, however, by Mr. HERDARL, who said that UTILITY had changed his mind in favor of tea at his home on the Starnbergsee. And so it was.

2. As with everything that UTILITY does, this interview had been carefully prepared, even down to the brief participation of his wife, a personable woman whose native volubility has obviously been cramped by years of anxious suppression in favor of the more purposeful volubility of her husband. Her arrival coincided roughly with the completion of UTILITY's detailed account of the history of OFFSPRING. After she had joined us, I switched the conversation to the general observations of one who had just come to Germany from Austria and had remarked certain not very subtle differences between the attitude of Americans towards Austrians and the attitude of Americans toward Germans. This prompted Mrs. UTILITY to express herself in rather uninhibited language about categorical de-Nazification and sensational reporting in the German and American press on German nationalism and militarism. Her points were well taken, although made with that uneasy intensity common to European wives of forceful Europeans, and deriving from a well founded uncertainty as to whether and when they will be advised, more or less gallantly, to shut up. Although her language was less guardedly tactful than UTILITY's, she was, I have no doubt, expressing UTILITY's own thoughts on the subject. I pointed out the influence that American public opinion plays in such matters and the impossibility of expecting the American public to be able to distinguish between the Abwehr and the SD or, for that matter, between the Abwehr and Fremde Heere Ost. At about this point UTILITY nodded to his wife in a manner which seemed to say that it was time she got the hell upstairs -- which she did.

3. Our amenities a trois had brought the conversation to the subject closest to UTILITY's heart - the problem of legitimizing OFFSPRING with UPGROWTH and of stage managing the transmutation of OFFSPRING into the future GIS. He feels that there will be increasing popular pressure in Germany for a relaxation of occupation controls and for a corresponding increase in the sovereignty of the Bonn Government. He obviously feels that the Allies are moving too slowly in this direction, although he

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understands fully the considerations of public opinion in France and England, as well as in the United States, which make speed impossible, not to mention the human factors involved among the occupation bureaucracy who can be expected to resist the loss of any part of the authority to which, over a period of five years, they have become comfortably accustomed. But he also understands - and is driven by - the time element as it plays on the German side. He is openly concerned about the charges of collaboration to which he and his co-workers are certain to be exposed - he cited some minor examples to show that this is already in the wind - as the Government tightens up on the relations of its subordinate officials with the occupation powers and as resentment against Allied controls and "guidance" grows. He is therefore anxious to combat the time element - as it works against him - by securing at least tacit official legitimization with the government as soon as possible. This will serve, in addition to logistical and servicing considerations, the double purpose of paving the way for future incorporation as the GIS and of protecting his people from the charge of being American agents. UTILITY stated frankly that this has been for the past year his primary and almost exclusive preoccupation. And this is where MERKUR comes in. It is MERKUR's job to cultivate and maintain contact with key political figures and to keep UTILITY informed of political developments on the German side.

4. Although UTILITY admits that his contacts are almost exclusively with the CDU, he hastens to point out that this is simply the result of the fact that the CDU/CSU is the governing party. He stresses his personal political non-partisanship, pointing to the apolitical tradition of the German Army, and insists that the future GIS must stand above politics and enjoy the support of all the major parties and of all the western occupying powers. The organization would, he says, like to have contact with the Socialists, but has desisted thus far because of SCHUMACHER's known antipathy to officers and because of the closeness of the German Socialists to the British, with whom, UTILITY points out wryly, if not bitterly, he also has no contact. He seems to feel that the best way to the Socialists would be via the British, and he is accordingly very anxious to make personal contact with a representative of the BIS, - he mentioned General HAYDEN and Mr. BAUMON - with our approval. He is aware of our reservations on this point and seems to have no intentions of violating them, but he is at a loss to understand why we do not sanction the same relation to the British which we have previously sanctioned with respect to the Swiss, the Spaniards, the French, etc. The problem is not, he says, acute at the moment, but he expects it to become acute within a year, and we can expect continued pressure and a lot of carefully formulated persuasion from him in the months to come. As for direct contact with the Socialists, he is afraid of a rebuff. He points out that SCHWERIN was told off by SCHUMACHER in no uncertain terms, from which he derives the reasonable conclusion that any meeting between himself and SCHUMACHER must be carefully prepared and must not, in any case, take place until a favorable reception is guaranteed. He has not met KNOERINGEN, Socialist leader in Bavaria, because of the latter's known closeness to the British - not to mention SCHWERIN. His immediate concern, however, is Bonn, and he intends to go to Frankfurt this week to meet GLOBKE with a view to sounding him out as to the best procedural plan for legitimization.

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5. As to my own sphere of activity, I told UTILITY that we were well acquainted and favorably impressed with him and his group on an operational basis, but that we felt considerably less completely in the picture with regard to his place in the German political picture. I told him that, in view of our common objectives with regard to the GIS, I thought it would be to our mutual advantage for us to know more about this aspect of his group, i.e., who their friends are, who their supporters are, what their general political orientation, etc. I pointed out that this was particularly important in view of the distance between Washington and Pullach and the suspicions about the German military which so actively influence American public opinion and, consequently, American policy decisions. He agreed wholeheartedly with this view, and promised to arrange a meeting a *trois* with MERKUR next week to discuss steps to be taken in this direction, including the revelation of a complete list of OFFSPRING's "special connections."

6. I had, on the whole, an excellent impression of UTILITY, better, indeed, than when I first met him on the occasion of C J's visit to Pullach. HERDANI told me beforehand when I suggested that it might be well if MERKUR were present at the interview, that "the Doctor is at his best when alone." He was, in any case, frank, serious, intense, thorough and, I think, sincere. He took it very well, for instance, when, during his discussions of the political problems relative to the absorption of OFFSPRING in the Bonn Government, I asked him whether his interests were exclusively in the intelligence field or whether he was not also concerned with keeping the decent elements of the German General Staff together for future use. He was obviously taken by surprise and asked me to repeat the question, which I did in a manner designed to give him time to formulate an answer. He said, "Exclusively intelligence for the time being. It so happens that some excellent General Staff officers, such as HORN, have joined our group, and we also maintain contact with others, such as GUDERIAN and SPEIDEL." He also mentioned some "excellent younger officers" now active with his organization.

7. There was no suggestion of the political naivete reflected in reports of UTILITY's activities a year ago, and I suspect that the past six months have taught him much. He is an uncommonly intelligent man and is certainly capable of learning from political experience. He showed a detailed understanding of persons and issues in the German political theater, and he made no attempt to conceal the fact that it is in politics that his primary interest now lies, not because of personal political ambition, nor because of any native yen for the game of politics, but rather because he knows that the future of his organization cannot be secured without mastery of the political problems involved.

8. Although we did not speak specifically of the "third force" concept, popular with so many Germans and given lip service by ADENAUER, who can hardly believe in it, I derived a strong impression from his discussion of the American role in world affairs that UTILITY is completely committed to

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the concept of Western Europe as an American bridgehead on the continent. He spoke repeatedly of the obsolescence of any narrow nationalist concept and observed that even England, in the last analysis, must dance to the American tune. He seems, indeed, rather anti-British, although he realizes that he must make his peace with British intelligence if he is to survive within the framework of the German Government. His feeling toward the Socialists is similar. He is not anti-Socialist, and he has great respect for many individual Socialists, but he shares the suspicions of a largely mythical Socialist left wing which is common to conservatives in Europe generally and to conservative military men everywhere.

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